No. 23 January 1974

The Journal

of the

Lancashire Dialect Society

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EDITORIAL

This year's Editorial is reduced to a few lines for a special reason. Readers will remember that last year we explained that the John Rylands University Library of Manchester had very kindly agreed to house the Society's collection of books. The cataloguing of these books was a major task. The member of the University Library staff principally responsible for undertaking it, Mr. J. G. Moss, has written a delightful dialect letter of acknowledgment and comment. To put the cream on the joke, he has given a translation of his own letter into deliberately stilted " officialese ". We feel sure that our readers would prefer Mr. Moss's letter and translation to the normal Editorial, so we are placing them at this point in the *Journal*. Here they are:

Dear Professor Brook,

Ah'm fain t'tell thee as wi'n dun fer thee all yon books fer t' Lankysheer Dialect Society tha fotched ter t' University Library a while sin.

Ah mun say ah were'nt reet work brattle abeawt it at fust bud when ah geet agate wi' 'um ah fair brast me sides laffin' an' ah were'nt so slippy abeawt doin' 'um fer fratchin' ter t' others abeawt t' job. Ah'd a getten me yed jowed be Mister Roberts, tha knows, if ah'd not getten shut on 'um fer Chrismus.

Well, sorry, they're eawt on t' road neaw, an' we 'n getten a tidy set o'kerds fer aw on 'um i' t' catalogue at t' Library, an' there's extry kerds fer t' Society as weel an' they're wantin' 'um. They'll be fair sprausin' abeawt it when they know what we 'n dun an' if there's owt else they want t' pass on to us, we'll hev 'um dun reet sharp.

Hopin' tha's a gradely Chrismus,

J. G. Moss

Dear Professor Brook,

I am pleased to tell you that we have now completed the cataloguing of the Lancashire Dialect Society's collection of books you were instrumental in bringing to us some time ago.

While it was not a task I immediately warmed to I must say that, in the event, it did give me and other members of staff considerable pleasure and the conversations sometimes engendered by this tended to prolong the task somewhat—to a point where I feel Mr. Roberts may have displayed some exacerbation were the task not completed by Christmas!

However, sir, the task is now completed and our holdings of these books will now be recorded in the University Library catalogue.

Should they so desire, an extra set of author cards is available for the Society.

I am sure they will derive considerable satisfaction from this knowledge and should they wish to add anything to the collection in the future, we will try to incorporate the items into it with the utmost dispatch.

Best wishes for Christmas,

J. G. Moss

PROGRAMME FOR 1974

All the meetings will take place in one of the private dining rooms of the Refectory of the University of Manchester. Members who ask to be reminded about meetings will receive a circular before each meeting asking if they wish to have dinner. Other members who wish to attend the dinner should write to the Treasurer about a week before the date of the meeting. Members who do not wish to come to the dinner will be very welcome at the meeting which follows, and for such attendance no notice is necessary.

Tuesday, 5th March, 7-30 p.m.

Speaker: Dr. J. D. A. Widdowson, Director of the Survey of Language and Folklore at the University of Sheffield.

Subject: Dialect and Folk Tradition.

Wednesday, 8th May, 7-30 p.m.

Annual General Meeting. The speaker will be Mr. Peter Roscoe.

Wednesday, 9th October, 7-30 p.m.

Speaker: Mr. J. Beasley.

Subject: Hulme-anitarian at large: the childhood recollections of a working-class child in the 1930's.

At all these meetings, aperitifs will be served at 6-15 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6-30 p.m.

A DIALECT STUDY OF QUARRY BANK NEAR DUDLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE

by MARGARET ROCK, B.A.

Quarry Bank, as its name suggests, owes its expansion as a village to industry, rather than agriculture. The surrounding area all once belonged to the Earl of Dudley, and has been extensively mined during the last 150 years to produce coal, which in turn supported local industry. Despite being at the heart of the Black Country it has remained isolated, until recent years, from surrounding towns by agricultural land and hilly terrain so that a very close homogeneous community developed, and still exists, though rapid expansion now threatens its identity.

The proximity of the village to both industrial and agricultural activities seems to have led to a division of loyalties amongst the inhabitants, who in their struggle for survival in the latter half of the last century and the early years of this, kept pigs and poultry in the " folds "/foudz/ or back-yards behind their tiny houses, as well as making chain in the " brew'us"/bru:us/ an out-house which stood within the fold. Almost all the women made small chain at home in order to supplement their husband's scanty and unreliable wages, but, despite great stringency, rarely managed to rise above sub-sistence level. The village was, at that time, predominantly composed of working-class people, with a couple of more wealthy families, who in times of great hardship ran soup kitchens.

Contact with the land was also preserved by the family's annual expedition to the country at " hopping-time ". Apart from this, the only times the inhabitants left the village were to buy winter clothes with the proceeds of hopping at nearby Cradley Heath, or to go on a club outing to Kinver or Clent. The population was both static and self-sufficient, so that the speech of older members of the com-munity is rich in terms used in the iron industry and certain areas of agriculture, and for the social and domestic structure of the day.

For this reason, the three informants selected, all natives of the area, and elderly men who take a pride in the knowledge of the village, may be said to be typical inhabitants, two having been metal workers in the village or surrounding area during their working lives, and the third having been the local baker, and retaining an active interest in community life. They share a working-class origin, but since such a high proportion of the native population emanates from such a background, this is representative of the total population. Their knowledge of the social history and development of the area is unsurpassed, especially in respect of the cottage industries and pig-keeping, which have now largely died out.

The phonology, vocabulary and syntax used by schoolchildren, housewives and other inhabitants of the area were also observed, to ascertain the currency of the linguistic features of the informants.

The unscripted speech of all three inhabitants was recorded at a time when they were felt to be sufficiently relaxed to be talking normally. Animated discussions which arose over reminiscences in the course of the interviews, especially when these were with other local inhabitants, eliminated traces of "talking posh" for the benefit of an ignorant fieldworker. Once their confidence had been gained, it was also possible to ask them direct questions about various words and local usages. The explanation given about obsolete practices and articles also yielded many syntactical features.

The Informants

1. Mr. Hadley, a 70-year-old retired baker who has also been a local councillor. Both he and his wife were born in and have lived all their lives in New Street, and their parents were also lifelong residents of Quarry Bank. He left school at the age of 12 to work in ironworks, and was later employed in local munitions factories before becoming apprenticed to a baker. His dialect seems an integral part of the local connections of which he is so proud.

2. Mr. Dunn, an 86-year-old former chainmaker, one of a family of seven born to illiterate parents. His wife was also a native of the district. He now lives alone, but relies on many of his old friends and workmates for company. Although he has read extensively, since leaving school at 13, and has a wide vocabulary, he is conscious that his dialect gives him an identity with the village community and talked freely about his reminiscences.

3. Mr. Penn, a 70-year-old school caretaker, who spent most of his working life in a nearby hollow-ware factory. He left school at the age of 13. His self-confidence and affability, especially in the role of a teacher, made for spontaneity in his speech. His job in a neighbourhood school brings him into contact with the younger members of the community and, with very little exception, he talks his native dialect at all times. His conversation with other villagers, during which he was oblivious to the presence of the field-worker, was also observed.

Vocabulary

A great deal of material was gleaned from the normal conversation of the informants, whose explanations of living conditions in

their younger days made them more conscious of their subject-matter than their speech. Dialect usage was inextricably involved with social conditions, at a time when education was merely elementary, and many older members of the family were illiterate. A fierce local pride and a determination not to feel inferior or ashamed at a personal level of the hard realities of life made a close community contemptuous of any airs and graces such as the use of Standard English. Since, in this respect, the use of dialect and social conditions are so closely interlinked, I have tried to illustrate the use of many words and phrases by giving them in the context in which they were used.

Changes in social conditions have also produced innovations in dialect expressions. To ask the " gaffer " (foreman) of a " work " (factory) to " set you on " (employ you) is current now as it was last century, but to go " on the labour " (to claim social security benefits while unemployed) or " on the box " (to be certified unfit for work by a doctor, and claim sickness benefit) are comparatively recent innovations.

A visit to a derelict house and nail-master's shop with Mr. Penn provided much information about obsolescent articles and the harsh realities of life at the beginning of this century, but this was supplemented by a questionnaire compiled with the aid of the *Introduction* to the *Survey of English Dialects* comprising a cross-section of questions which were felt to have most relevance to the general life of the area. In this way, both obsolescent and current terms were investigated. Items like the affirmative " ar " (yes), for instance, emerged from normal conversation, but only by direct questioning was it ascertained that heavy shoes were known as " keffles ". The fact that shoes are said to be " tapped " rather than soled then emerged in subsequent conversation.

The Kitchen Range

The kitchen range was the centre of family life since it provided warmth, and all food was cooked on it. Ranges are still used in a few of the more old-fashioned cottages. Some have holes above the flue to enable herrings to be smoked to make bloaters, and other fittings include " strides " to hang on the bars so that a saucepan or flat-iron could be warmed in front of the fire, and a meat-jack or spit. Lard could also be rendered, using a special " lard-pon " to simmer the fat. The oven-plates, or a fire-brick which had been wrapped in blankets and left in the oven to warm, were used as bed-warmers.

There was often a screen, or a settle at the side of the fire-place, but the family would also sit on the " sofey " or " squab ", or in the " pig-benches ", stools used to tie up the pig before cutting its throat, which would subsequently be scrubbed clean and returned to

household use. The " quarried " floor (with red tiles) was covered with " podged " rugs, made out of " ode cloes " (old clothes), the walls were boarded and white-washed, and the ceiling (/sɛɪ ɪŋ/) of laths, " tacked up " and " skimmed " (plastered). The roof above was supported by " eight be seven parlins " (beams), running from " one brickwork to the tother ", and held in place by " cotters ".

Economy was a necessity: when " yo' 'ollered (hollowed) the fire aht on a mornin ", the ashes were scooped out from the ess-hole (ash-hole), and riddled through the grid over the " forgit-hole ", a small pit in front of the fire which was periodically emptied. " Them as was left ", the bits of unburnt coal, were then put back on the fire as " backing ". At night the fire was either " douted " (put out), or, in order to make it burn slowly, made up with slack (/slæk/-coaldust) or " raked ", by placing a large lump of coal (a " raker " /rɛ:kə/), on it, so that the fire burned against the grain of the coal. " Gleeds ", small lumps of coal, were saved for cooking purposes, and kept in a " gleed-scoven " beside the range.

The " biler " used for washing, storing bread, or making pig-swill in, was another essential feature; it always had a small window behind it to " loose the stem aht ". The " millpun ", a large earthenware vessel, used for mixing the " duff " for bread, and brewing the " porter " (stout), which was made with black malt and " barm " (yeast), was another necessity, as were the " maiding-tub " and " dolly ", used for washing clothes and the " tun-dish " (funnel).

Often, the inhabitants of several of the " 'ousen " round about would send their " pillins " (vegetable peelings and scraps) to those of their neighbours who kept pigs. The child who took them would be rewarded immediately with " a two-three suck " (sweets), and then, when there was a " pig-sticking " the " fry " (lungs, liver and heart) would be distributed amongst the families who had helped in this way. Everyone " peddled in together " in this way, especially at such times as " bunnyfire day " " as was allus (always) 'oliday ".

The pig-sty (/pɪgstɪ/) was, therefore, another important feature of the " gardin " or " fold ", and terms for pigs include the " nisgul " (weakling), and a " gilt " or " open gilt ", meaning a female which has not yet been " in pig ". The litter was known as a " farry ", and the snout, for obvious reasons, the " rooter ".

The household would wait until a hog was about eighteen scorn (that is, weighed 360 pounds) before killing it, and very little of the animal would ever go to waste. Salt, to make brine, would be bought from a " Salt-ooman " who brought her " float " around and bacon was then salted on the pantry " sills ". The " flitchins " were then hung, wrapped in pillow-cases, to prevent them getting

" fly-blowed ", inside the house. The " chicklins " (intestines) were dressed and knotted, and the bladder kept to put " over the stoon jar for pittlin "; or blown up as a football. Two kinds of lard were made, one using the " leaf " or fat surrounding the kidneys, known as " liftin lard ", and the other from the fat around the intestines, which was " mudgin " lard. The scraps left behind the " scratchings " are still sold in local shops, where the old trick of putting a slice of " rousty " (old, yellowed and strong) bacon in with a " pun " of new and " marrying " them is also still employed.

Often the men would take bacon with them to work and " frizzle " it, using a clean shovel as a " frypon " over the fire, making " a pace (piece) o'dip " by dipping a piece of bread into the " licker " (bacon fat).

Local dishes, like faggots, made out of the " fry " and wrapped in " kell ", " grorty dick " or pudding, made of pork and groats and " bony pie " made from the " backboon " are all a testimony to the popularity of pig-keeping. The stringent eating-habits of a lifetime are also seen to be reflected in the continued popularity of " tripe and cow-heels ". " Fittle " (food) was indeed once hard to come by.

Another integral part of domestic life was keeping fowl. Many remedies still exist to make them eat more grit and lay eggs with shells rather than " wine eggs ", and to relieve " craw-bound birds ", which often involved a minor operation for which it was essential to have a sharp knife " keened " on a " strap ".

Industry

The extensive mining in the area, both in pits and open-cast workings, supported the iron industries. In addition to coal-mining, however, " marl " (clay) was dug from marloes (marlholes) to be made into bricks at the " brickle ". Much of the area which was mined is now built on, but at the bottom of the bank (steep hill) in an area still known as the " coppy " (coppice) although it is no longer wooded, the " rough " (gently sloping land) still bears the scars of its former usage as a " gleedbank " (waste-tip) from which usable pieces of coal were scavenged. There is also still evidence of " crowner's ends ", holes which have appeared where old mine-shafts have not been crowned and the land above has subsequently subsided.

Many traditional jobs have now been taken over by machinery, so that " 'neallers ", whose job was to anneal (soften) steel, so that it could be cut, and " puddlers ", who melted the " ironstone " so that when the iron boiled, the " later " (limestone waste) could be skimmed off the top, and the pure metal " loosed out ", " shut off "

or " racked off ", are now non-existent. Gone also are " shindlers ", who received square rods of iron to " whack dahn to rolls " suitable for chain-making, hammer-drivers, who did very much the same thing on a larger scale using cumbersome, primitive machinery, and " bundlers ", who made up hundredweight batches of " stalks " of iron ten or twelve feet long.

" Foggers ", middlemen who sold stalks of iron to the women for making small chain, and then collected the finished article, making a payment in kind from their " tommy shaps " have dwindled just as this domestic industry has. They were also often the landlords so that if housewives had " been strapped for " too much (that is, they had had too much " on tick ", or credit), they were liable to attempt a " moonlight flit ".

Otherwise, many aspects of working-class life remain unchanged. Wives still " pur the snap (or middlenight) up " for their husbands, depending on which shift they are working, and this often consists of a " noggin " (bread and cheese) a " piece o' jam " (bread and butter and jam), and a can of tea which has previously been " steeped " (brewed). " Broth " (thin stew) is a common meal for the worker to have on his return home, with " pasnips " and " taters ", but he is more likely to go to the " public " or " boozer " for pints of beer than to " swig back " quarts of home-brewed " porter " at work.

Perhaps Mr. Dunn summed up life in the area best when he explained " Churchill, when he were exhorting us to fight an carry on, he said we couldn't expect nothing but blood and tears and sweat—it dae mek no difference to us round 'ere, we 'ad it all we lives! We'd come up in it. It was all sweat and toil. They was all 'ard jobs round ere—all fire and darkness. I've seen girls at work at ten o'clock at night, in Sheffield Street, making chain, which was 'ard job for girls—they'd gorra mek the blast theirselves—and singing like nightingales—' Britons never shall be slaves ' ".

The continued existence of blast-furnaces which light up the sky at night gives currency to the couplet:

" When Satan stood on Brierley Hill and far around him gazed
He said: ' I never more shall feel at hell's fierce flames amazed '."

Times have changed enormously during the life-time of the informants: sanitation has made " closets " or " petty-holes ", " ash-pits " and " night-soiling " things of the past, but where household matters remain unchanged, dialectal expressions are still current. The " door-sill " (threshold), " the front " and " the back " (the sitting-room and living-room respectively, differentiated by their position) and the " other place ", denoting another room, survive.

People, however, remain the same, and though there may not be as many " cock-eyed " (cross-eyed) or " plough-footed " (splay-footed) individuals as there were, many people are still nicknamed " Cag " because they are " caggy (left-'onded) ". Someone who is always " toffed up " is a " masher ", a fool is a " maukin " and anyone who " cants or gabs (gossips) " a " back-biter ". When a girl is called a " wench ", it has no more pejorative overtones than " daughter-law " or " mate " which is invariably used for a friend, or " chap " for a boy.

To " gape " may mean to yawn, or merely to stare gormlessly. Anyone who is " clammed to djeath " (very hungry) may be " gutsy " (greedy) and " gollop " his food down, or scald his " wozzin " (throat) with hot tea, but will certainly stop if he gets a crumb stuck in his " guggle " (windpipe). If he over-indulges he may find himself " bad abed " (ill in bed).

A child who has " played away " (played truant from school) to catch " tiddlers ", " jack-bannocks " (sticklebacks) " red butchers " or " bull-yeds " in the brook may earn himself a " larruping " or find that his father will " fetch him a clout or a belt up the ear-'ole " in which case he could well end up " blairtin' 'is eyes up " (crying hard) and start the " babby " " grizzling " in sympathy, only to be told, " That'll learn yer, now knock off snivelling (or more simply ' Nark it ') will yer? " He would expect a similar punishment for throwing a " brick " or " bibble " (both used for smallish stones) through a window, or even trapping a " wammle " (small animal).

Other words for a heavy blow include " cogwinder " and " cockhaver " both of which seem to owe their existence to manual work in industry. In addition, the roughness of some of the traditional games seems to reflect this harsh background of physical toil, for example, " whack-'oss ", where the idea is to see how many children can jump on to the back of another child before he " knacks " (collapses, possibly a back-formation from " knacker "). The truce-word used in such games as " tick " (tag) is " barley ".

The extent to which non-linguistic communication enters into dialect can be seen in such expressions as " collar ote " or " cop ote " (catch hold) which is very rarely explained further. Nods and facial expressions seem to be used widely to clarify the speaker's and hearer's attitude to the matter in hand. Other expressions like " he's only bin and stayed at ' wum ' (home) " while apparently contradictory both intensify the statement and express the speaker's disgust or enlightenment, depending on the tone of voice: in any case he needn't " mither " (worry) any more, for the whole situation is clarified. Similarly " he's here again—he ae come " show a liking for playing with words, but vividly expresses the fact that this is typical behaviour.

Many expressive similes, such as " a voice like a gleed under the door " for a harsh, grating voice also exist.

Words whose meaning differs from that in the standard language include " to learn ", which means both to teach and learn and " to be starved " (O.E. steorfan), which means both to be hungry and to be very cold. " To bost " (burst, O.E. berstan) has the general meaning of to break although " bosting ", meaning splendid, and an " ockerboster " which is a great big one seem to derive from the energy and vigour implied in its more conventional use. " Hark " is more commonly used than listen, and "'ark at 'er" implies either incredulity or slight disapproval at the length or manner in which the subject is being expounded.

To " swill " something out is to wash it rather perfunctorily but this does not convey the same disapprobation as to " dab wash " which implies that the process is far from thorough. A " cat lick and a promise ", used mainly of people, is more perfunctory still, but also implies a consciousness that the situation must be righted.

Lights, even when the householder is " on the 'lectric " are always " shut off " and other peculiar modes of expression include " at that particular time of the day " which means simply " at that time ", and can refer to a period years ago, and " we didn't have the hour on then " that is, it was before the introduction of British Summer Time. This is probably a parallel construction to " have you got the time on you? ", which serves the dual purpose of ascertaining whether the person asked has a watch, and, if so, asking to be told the time.

Semantic Development

" Bad " is commonly used instead of " ill ", in such examples as " I doe (don't) half feel bad "; and " badness " is therefore used with the exclusive sense of " illness ". " Oh, the badness! " is therefore not the exclamation of an indignant person considering the wickedness of the world, but a complaint about the number of minor ailments affecting friends.

Similarly, " mouth " is used in the sense of " cheek ': " He dae (didn't) stand no mouth ", and the organ itself is commonly called the " gob " especially in the pejorative sense as in " shut yer gob ". " Road " supplants " way " in practically every context such as " yo'm doin it the wrong road ", " any road up " (anyway) and " mind out the road " (be careful and move out of the way), and in order to make some distinction between the way and a metalled road, the latter is known as the " 'oss-road " (horse-road), despite the fact that very few horses are now seen in the area.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary gives as a definition of "larrikin", "(usually young) street rowdy, hooligan" [c. 1870 Australian], yet this word is used to mean tongue: it is difficult to see whether this is a completely independent development of what seems to be quite an unusual word, or an extension of meaning having to do with the unseemly noise made by such people.

Figurative usage also marks off expressions from their conventional meaning: "plaiting them" for instance, means walking unsteadily or staggering from side to side in an attempt to walk forwards, and is, for obvious reasons, often used of the movement of people who are the worse for drink.

Word-Formation

Compound nouns are formed readily from combinations of two nouns, like "wind-folds", "gleed-bank", "pig-bench" and "bally-stick" (the stick used to keep the carcase of a pig open when it was hung). Various verbal nouns are also used in the creation of compound nouns, such as the present participle in "pig-sticking", "night-soiling" (the removal of refuse by night) and "hopping-time-s"; and a preposition may also be added to the verbal noun as in the "scrapings-up" (youngest child of a family). "Drop-latch" shows the combination of an infinitive and a noun, as do "slaughter-'us" (house) "brew-'us" and "wash-'us". "Suck-'us" is also used to mean sweet-shop, but although it has been formed by analogy with these forms "suck" is normally used as a collective noun in this sense, and the compound does not carry the normal meaning of "a building in which to do" whatever the verb suggests. Another combination is verb plus preposition, as in "wash-ups" (washing-bowls). "Crowners' ends" (holes in the ground caused by a "crowner" an occurrence of subsidence or "crowning-in" and "gleeds 'scoven" are instances of the defining noun being given an -s suffix where the tendency in Standard English is to omit it. "Middlenight", the "topside" "bony-pie" an "erden (hessian) bag" and "grorty (groaty) pudding" show adjective and noun combinations.

The adverb "screwifted" or "scowifted" seems to be a blend of "squiffy" and "askew" and simply means "not straight", and "tranklaments" is often used to mean "small belongings", but of obscure origin.

In keeping with the use of "hark" instead of listen, a hearing-aid is referred to as a "harker".

"Spiflicated", meaning broken to bits, also appears to be an artificially created word.

Nouns

Both " peasen ", a survival of old weak plural form and " housen " which is historically strong, were recorded, as were " barn " (bars), " scorn " (score) and " yearn " (years). In addition to this, several nouns, usually units of measurement, were not given their conventional -s marker indicating the plural form. These included " a couple of pound " (weight), " two hundred and thirty pound " (money), " a couple of mile away ", " these cabbitch ", and " a two-three suck " (sweets).

Pronouns

Perhaps the most striking aspect of pronominal usage is the currency of the second person singular form " thee ", which is used in conversing with a friend, both in subjective forms, such as " hie thee off " and as the object: " I'm as good a mon as thee ", and " what I'm a-trying to tell thee, my wench ". The corresponding possessive form is " thy ", with the disjunctive " thine ".

The Standard English first person plural pronoun " we " fulfils not only its normal subjective role, but is used almost universally as the objective " there was seven o'we ", " he told we about it ", " they used to throw the sticks at we " and " her used to keep we ". In addition to this, it is often used as the possessive form, as in " we copy-books ", " we work ", and " on we own " although " in ours " is used to signify " in our house ", and the emphatic form is " ourn ". Curiously, although " us " is rarely used in its normal plural sense, it is widely used in such phrases as " Come and find us " to mean " me ", and " giz ", which is a shortened form of " give it us ".

In the feminine form of the third person " 'er " is used almost exclusively as the subjective, as well as the objective, pronoun: " 'er'd never bin married ". The disjunctive form is " hersn " or " hern ". Similarly, " them " fulfils the role of the more conventional " those " in the plural form, as in " them two there " and " in them days ". Yet where " them " is normally used in the objective form, it was often supplanted by " 'em ", to give " seven on (of) em ", and " er gi'd it to em ". The possessive form " their " is usually unstressed and shortened to " the ": " they used t'ave all the cloes (their clothes) mandled ". In agreement with the other disjunctive forms, the third person plural has " theirn ".

The reflexive forms vary, so that beside " I 'ad to wash me ", and " she used to wash her " exist " we looked after weselves ", " they clothed theirselves ", and " he had a bob on hisself " (he thought a lot of himself).

The most common form of the relative pronoun is " as ", which is used instead of " who ", as in " he'd gorra brother as lived here ", and " the man as they med the work for " or " that " in " they was four things as nearly every woman done ", " the fathers sid as they went to school " and " summat (something) as you looked forward to ". " What " is also frequently used, however, in such cases as " it's only port wine what I've dropped down me ". Sometimes, the relative pronoun is simply omitted. " There was nobody gor enough money to buy a cradle ", and " there used to be 'ouse 'd got two steps ".

"As " is even used instead of "so that" for instance in " I put a partition in, as it cou'nt come through " and " that " replaces " so very" or "extremely" in "she was that old " and " the knots'd go that tight ", which are left without further qualification.

Adjectives

The -en suffix which is used in many adjectives denoting material in Standard English is also used in " brassen " and " leaden " and " erden " (hessian). One unusual superlative form which was recorded was " middlemost ", meaning the middle child of a large family, and there was a marked tendency to use " the biggest lot of people ", rather than " most people ". " The morist " was, in fact, the only form of " most " recorded, along with the unusual form of the comparative seen in " more bigger sizes ".

Conjunctions and Prepositions

" Without " frequently replaces " unless " as in " they won't come again, without you give them a cup o'tea " and " only " can mean *except* in " you never had a cup o'tea, only when it was tea-time ", or replace *but* in certain contexts like " I'm sorry I'm late, only I fell over " or be used to intensify a statement like " she's only done it ". " Before " is limited in use to references to relative position, such as " 'er was a-standing before the fire ", whereas it is replaced by " afore " or " fore " in remarks about time, like " I 'ad to do all that afore I went to school ".

Another curious feature of usage is that " of " and " on " seem to be practically interchangeable; both " on a morning " and " of a morning " are used in describing a typical day or recurrent pattern of events, and I also recorded " jump out on it ", " it'd take all the heart out on you " and " all on 'em " where Standard English uses " of ". In some instances like " a lot odd jobs " the preposition is omitted completely, and replaced by a momentary pause. " Of " can also replace " with " as in "the plate was that high of pancakes".

The second preposition " to " is omitted in expressions like " to go up the shops " and " they've bin over Mushum " (Mushroom Green). The tendency to use a noun instead of a second preposition results in such ambiguous statements as " 'er used to walk up the side of a chainwork ".

Other unusual forms include " agin " for " until " in " 'er kep it agin the time one on 'em was bad ", the use of " after " instead of " afterwards " in " when 'e died, our son had the bed after ", and the use of " in " rather than " inside " in " it's like manure what's in ".

Where prepositions end a sentence and refer back to information already given, an explanatory noun or pronoun which is necessary in the standard language is often omitted, as in " there was sills over there, and there was a barrel o' beer on " and " they all got gardins with plenty greenstuff in ".

Adverbs

Many adjectives are used as adverbs without the conventional -ly suffix which is added in Standard English, in cases like " we lived very 'ard ", " we was bad off really ", " I dae (didn't) do too bad ", and " it'd come out regular ". In other instances where the standard language would demand a passive construction, retaining the adjectival form, the same pattern emerges: " 'er could sing lovely " and " it'd drop on black ". The words " gain " (useful) and " ungain " (as opposed to S.E. " ungainly ") (clumsy, awkward, of a person or object) are also used in this way, and " betimes " (early), as in " I was up betimes today " is another departure from standard usage.

The apparent illogicality which marks dialect usage can be seen in the expression " to walk two double ", which means two abreast, and not, as it might seem, four abreast, but in this case " double " merely fulfils the sense of " abreast ".

Verbs

Present tense

Certain common verbs have an -s ending in the first person singular of the present tense, by analogy with the third person singular, to give forms like " I thinks ", and " I says ". In addition to this all three informants used forms with an -en ending, which as Martyn Wakelin points out in *English Dialects An Introduction* is usually explained as originating in the present subjunctive form. This is quite feasible in the examples " if yo stirrin it ", " they talkin about the good old days " and " cows they treadin in all the muck " which were used in the present tense, although the latter does not

seem to be a typically subjunctive construction, and may be a present participle with the auxiliary verb omitted through lack of stress. However, in three examples, all of which refer to habitual actions, this form was used as a past tense: " like yo' allus talkin " (as you always spoke), " yo pullen yerself up by it " and " they putten you on the gleed-hearth ". Perhaps the explanation for this may lie in the occasional use of the present tense in conversation about past events to add to the vigour of narration.

The verbs which are used as auxiliaries have distinctive forms, especially when they stand alone; whereas the first person singular form of the verb " to be " used as an auxiliary is " I'm ", as in " I'm a-goin ", its most emphatic form is " I bin ", which can also be used for all the plural forms. In the third person plural, the most common form with the pronoun is " bin ", " they bin ", or " bin 'em ", yet " am " is frequently used with a noun as in " the feet am cowheels " and " shoes am very difficult to come by ". The corresponding second person singular form is " bist " which is used in the common greeting " 'ow bist? " which becomes " 'ow bin yer? " in the plural. There are also corresponding negative forms: Bae [bæɪ] or ae [æɪ] are used for the whole paradigm, with the exception of the second person singular, which has " thee bisn't ", and the third person singular, which can also be " in't ". Similarly the negative form of " have " is a [a:].

" Can ", which is normally pronounced " con " in stressed positions, has the second person singular form " cost ", and the negatives " cor " and " cosn't ". The negative forms of " shall ", " will " and " do " are " shor ", " woe " and " doe " respectively.

Other unusual forms recorded were " lest have a look ", (for let's, meaning let me) where metathesis seems to have occurred, and " I dursn't " (I dare not).

Present participle

The present participle is always preceded by the prefix a-, which represents Old English *on* preceding the verbal noun, as in " as long as the light was a-lasting out ", " we'n just bin a-laughing " and " Obadiah's a-coming ".

Past tenses and past participles

The past tense of the verb " to be " shows a reversal of the pattern in Standard English, for the first person singular is often " were ", as in " when I were young " and " I were often making them scamper ", and the plural form is often " was " as in " yo was lucky if yo'd got 'apenny ", and " they was on the labour ".

Alternatively, the plural form is " wun ", seen in " what these kids wun a-doing ", " we wun just the same " and " you wun a king ", or in its reduced form " when yo'n babbies ". The corresponding negative form is " wor ".

In one instance, the expanded form of the verb was used in preference to the simple past to describe a recurring event, in " when it used to be pancake day ".

The past tense using " have " as an auxiliary is usually expressed by " n ", suggesting the existence of a form like *han at some time in the past. Examples of its use are " we'n just bin a-laughin' " and " where'n yo bin? " The perfect conditional tense, however, has the form seen in "if we'd a-spoke about", "if there'd a-been children" (for if we'd had children), " if I'd a-seen you ", and " I shun't a went if I'd a-knowed ". It is difficult to ascertain whether this is a survival of the Old English prefix ge- before the past participle or a formation on the analogy of forms like " should have ", especially in view of another conditional construction recorded " had I of been ".

The auxiliary verb " do " also has a distinctive negative form " dae " [del], as in " if yer dae do that ".

Unusual strong forms of the past tense include "fled" for "flown" (although this may have been caused by analogy, since it occurred in the phrase " bred and fled "), " kep " rather than " kept " and " druv " instead of " drove ". " Come ", " give " or "gied", "sid" or " seen ", and " done " are of course more common dialect usages. Weak forms of strong verbs included " slided ", " growed ", " knowed ", " blowed up ", " bursted " (or " bosted "), " catched ", " buyed " and " loosed ". The device " went and " plus the past tense is used as an intensifier, as in " 'er went and died ".

The past participle used included " I've took them out ", " they've drag 'em out many a time ". " I'm froze " and "now I've swore ".

Definite Article

The definite article is normally reduced to "th" before words beginning with a vowel, as in " th'oven ". Apart from this the most noteworthy feature of the use of the article is the omission of the indefinite article in similar circumstances. It is usually replaced by a very slight pause, as in " he had organ when he was 21 " " we had egg between two or 'ock off a pig", and "she kept eye out". Occasionally there is the merest hint of an " a " sound in the pause.

The only time the indefinite article is used before a number is in the expression " a two-three " which is used rather in the sense of " a few " than as an actual number. The definite article is commonly used before the names of ailments like " the tooth-ache " and

" the bally-ache ", but it is common to avoid specifying the ailment, and say, rather mysteriously " he's got it in his head", or "in his stomach ".

The definite article is inserted in the form " er'd cut the 'alf off " where Standard English would have " half of it ".

Syntax

The use of the double negative as an intensifying rather than a logically self-defeating device is common. This can take the form of a negative form of a verb plus a pronoun, as in " they dae give yer none " " they dae take no more notice " and " nobody woe disturb yer ", or a verb negated conventionally with a pronoun, as in " nobody hadn't used to ", and " I never knowed ne'er another ". In one interesting instance, the verb " to swear " in the sense of to utter a profanity, was used as a transitive verb, so that, in contrast with " he swore bloody ", the double negative " he never swore nothing " was used.

Examples of unusual word-order included an objective nominal clause beginning a sentence. " The back of this house, the ground was up so far (indicated) to it ", and part of the subject ending another: " it'd probably be going off a bit with strength ". In other instances, the adverb, far from being as close to the verb as possible, was at the end of the sentence " they didn't get any work, hardly " and " they got it from the mineral, straight ". Again in a case where " hardly " is meant from its context to qualify the subject, it is placed between two parts of the verb, and the subject is given its negative form " nobody'd hardly believe you ". This seems to be a peculiar mixture of the two constructions " nobody would believe you " and " hardly anybody would believe you ".

Another apparently illogical structure can be seen in: " there was hardly 'ouse but what, in the brew'us, mother was a-making chain ", meaning " where the mother was not making chain ", and " 'ers never made a custard but what the pastry a (hasn't) come to the top" which means that when she makes a custard, "the pastry always come to the top ".

Often, in the heat of conversation, strict agreement between parts of speech within a sentence are lost, but in several cases such false concord could be attributed to usage, as in " everybody wun neighbours ", " they never swore in their life " and " he's (he has) no right here, nor thee bisn't ".

"A good many " and " some", are both used to indicate an indefinite number of people, but even designations as imprecise as this do not detract from the popularity of the passive construction, as in " there hadn't many got mangles ", and " there have some

people died round here ". In some cases, a place-name or concrete noun is used to designate all the people concerned in an organisation or place as in " the pub bought it " and " we doe talk so broad as them from the Lye: [poːək] that's how the Lye talk ".

The same impersonal construction used in talking about the weather " it tumbled down of snow " can also be used of social conditions which existed almost as phenomena, in the past, for instance " it was hanging lamps, then ". Similarly, in talking of recurrent events in the past, the impersonal construction " bunny-fire day, there'd be roasting taters and boilin 'em " is used, but this can also be used of finite verbs as well as verbal nouns, as in " there'd probably five or six run off " or telescoped into " Good Friday'd be scramblin' to sell yer hot-cross buns ".

It is possible to omit various parts of speech from sentences without a corresponding loss of sense so that the auxiliary can be missed out in " we used to have a screen where that woman got a curtain", "when you gorra go back?" and "you gorra forget that" and part of the infinitive in "you can stand be losing it". In certain contexts even the subject and verb can be omitted, without any loss of meaning, as in "you'd hear them calling you", and "a belt up the earole if you dae hurry up ", " they killed the pigs, and you'd be after the bladders to play with ", and " they'd stop a while, and then after him again ". Occasionally, prepositions can be substituted for part of a compound verb, as in " I'm on about Sarah " (I'm talking about Sarah).

The desire for emphasis on certain parts of speech results in the use of a redundant personal pronoun after a noun, for instance " Wilf's mother, she'd bake every day " and in the use of the possessive adjectives " our " and " your " in front of Christian names to denote a family relationship.

Understatement is also frequently used to intensify the impact or meaning of an otherwise uninteresting statement: " he wasn't half toffed up " (dressed up) is far more vivid than " he was toffed up ", and " he wasn't all that bad " bears the implication that " he wasn't all that good " either. This construction is also used in the positive in " I was half cold in there ".

A failure to distinguish between the infinitive and preterite forms of verbs is exemplified by the use of the preterite form of " owe ", " ought " in " they couldn't keep two children as they'd ought to have been kept ".

FIRST O'MAY

by W. COOKE

Ah geet mi up ont' first o' May,
Afore th'owd cock had crow'd;
Ah knew ut wife had bought a hat
Int' th'Easter springtime mode.

There'd be no peace o' mind fer me
If ah laid there int' bed,
Wi't' sun as breet as yon new hat,
Wi't' bloom sun never bred.

But, " did ah like id, does ti say "?
Ah doubt if mony would,
Except, perhaps, our billie-goat;
To him, id tasted good!

If ah could be as true to taste,
An' tell t'wife wod ah thought,
Ah'd be as smart as t' billie-goat;
But dunnot think ah ought,

Fer thad would be the end o' me,
As weel as t' wife's new hat.
Ah'll leave th'owd goat to prove his point.
An' let id stop at that.

MIDDLIN NOBBUT MIDDLIN THANKS

by IAN BALDWIN

Ahm middlin nobbut middlin thanks
Ahm alreight in misel,
Mi ankle's playin mi up ageean
Mi showlder urts as weeal.
Ah thank thi tho fer askin mi
As ow ah feel tha nooas,
But that thurr pain as wur in mi knee
As spread reight to mi tooas.

Ahm not fer pailin up yon ills,
Not jus a moment lahk,
Bur another week on them thur pills
Ah ahl jump oer Rivvy Pike.
Ahve ad a funny turn tha nooas
And berra get te bed
Cos this ere twinge as wur in mi nooas
As gone aw thro mi yed.

Ah went to t'Rovers t'other day
Ids aw mi own daft fault,
Burra carn seem te gooa te t'privvy now
Ahl after tek sum salts,
Ahve ad them pains across mi chest
Enuff fer t'mek mi scrike,
Ahd berra go te t'doctor mon
It maht bi serious lahk.

Ah durn't nooa ow ahve kept ont move
These lass few days o mooa,
Cos ah ave ter seh as now ahm axed
Ahm feelin furrly pooa.
Ah sed as ah wurr middlin lahk
When this yer rahm begun,
But now ahm sad t after seh
Ahm a sick 'n deyin man.

Ahl allus foller t'Rovers
But ee at worra cost,
Mi'elth as gone ahve nobbut long
an t'silly buggers lost.
Chuck mi ashes on t'Darren end
Ahm thinkin te misel
But worrabout yon gormless team
They'd bess barn em as weall.

STRANGER BEWARE

by VIOLET M. TURNER

The stranger finding himself amongst dialect speakers will, for the most part, recognise dialect words and hazard a guess at their meaning from the context, or, at least, he will be aware of his ignorance. But danger lies in those seemingly innocent standard English words (and there are many of them) which have a different meaning in dialect usage.

A recent newcomer to Mow Cop from the South had only just become accustomed to calling hills *banks*, when he was puzzled to have his perfectly flat garden referred to as *the bank*. Such is the name given to the garden, yard, ground round a house, and so *pit-bank* and *pot-bank*. *Bank-men*, as opposed to *delf-men*, are the surface workers at a colliery. To have no room for a thing is likely to bring forth the expression: " I wouldn't have it on the *bank* ". " He's gone *down-bank* " means " he has worsened in health or circumstances ". *May-Bank* symbolises the treacherous weather of that month; cheerfulness over a fine spring is countered with: "Aye, but we've still got to climb *May-Bank* ", or anyone ailing through the winter will say: " If I can just climb *May-Bank*, I shall pull through ".

Acre is the old word for field, regardless of its size. My father (b. 1886), in recalling the days of his boyhood on a small-holding, would speak of " the top *acre* ", " the bottom *acre* ", " the long *acre* ".

Badger in a business context may sound as if it had the usual meaning of " pester " or " harass ", but in fact means more specifically to " barter " or " haggle ". A *badger* was formerly a dealer in corn.

Bash is not to employ physical violence, but to subdue in spirit, to cast down—more the sense of " abash ".

Bass is not the promise of refreshment, but coal of poor quality, that will not burn away. (*Bannock* has the same meaning.)

Bastile. Living memory recalls the dread of the *bastile*, the local name for the workhouse. (Mr. John Levitt gives a fuller note in the 1971 issue of this *Journal*.)

Bat, noun, is a bun, and is more usually a *currant bat*.

Beak is to kiss.

Beat: (1) noun—a difference, a disagreement, an argument; (2) verb—with " up ", to remove layer of earth from roadway in mine. Miners returning from a spell in Yorkshire brought back the word

dent for the same activity; (3) adjective—bruised with pressure. Miners suffered from *beat-knees* through kneeling in low seams.

Beck: (1) noun—the peak of a cap, or a patch over the eye; (2) verb—to nod one's head in greeting.

Bonnie as used at Mow Cop is not quite as complimentary as the Scots would intend it, but means decidedly buxom and plump, or *fed-up*, which locally has the obsolete meaning of " fatted ".

Bottle, in the expression " to be no *bottle* "—no good.

Bowler is not a hat, but a child's iron hoop for bowling. *Bowler and hook* came round in season for boys.

Brat is not a child, but its pinafore, or a woman's apron.

Burn, usually in the plural, means abundance, mass, superfluity.

Cant, verb, is to tell tales. As a noun, it means gossip or hearsay, and a person who *cants*. There is a children's chant:

Canty, canty, custard,
Dip your nose in mustard.

Charity: the annual festival for children in noncomformist chapels, also called the *Sermons*. Once the highlight of the year, now almost obsolete. *Charity clothes* are not what they sound, but were the best that could be afforded for the celebration, and thereafter *Sunday best* for the ensuing year.

Chats are small pieces of coal suitable for lighting a fire.

Clog: to toil doggedly at a job: " I must keep *clogging*, come what "; to recover from illness: " He's been very bad, but he's *clogging* ".

Cop is a hedge-bank, or the top of a rise: Mow *Cop*.

Cork is the core of an apple, etc.

Cotter is a blow: "A *cotter* i' th'ear-'ole ". (*Sutter* has the same meaning).

Craft: not nautical, but agricultural: a small field (croft).

Deck is to desist, refrain from: " *Deck it!* "—" Stop it! "

Ding: not " ding, dong, bell ", but, with " up ", means to throw oneself into work, to work very hard, or to throw down with force. *Dinged*—dented or bruised—may be related, and *dinger*—rogue.

Ditty is a story, usually witty.

Elder is udder, and *alder* is elder—the tree or fruit.

Farm is used of general activity or business: " What's he *farming* at these days? "

Fast means engaged, booked up, fully occupied: " I'm *fast* on Wednesdays ".

Flash is a stretch of water: pit *flashes; The Flash*, at Winsford.

Fled means to have gone out, and I think is only found in this form. " It's no use calling, they are always *fled* ".

Fluff: a flea. *Fluffy:* flea-ridden, or a term of abuse.

Fornicate is to lie, to deceive, to dissemble. It is common to hear a small child reproved as a " *fornicating* little thing ". Wright gives *fawnicate*, " to fondle affectionately " (Ken. Sus.). Certainly there is some sense of " fawning " in the Mow Cop usage, but more in the style of Uriah Heep than out of affection.

Fridge is not the usual abbreviation for refrigerator, but is the verb " to chafe ". *Raucy* material will *fridge* the skin.

Grin. An old lady still speaks of *grinning knots* in shoe-laces, *grin* being the old word for " noose " or " snare " that appeared in early copies of the Authorised Version of the Bible and was later changed to *gin* (*Job* xviii 9).

Hill is the verb to cover, coddle, tuck up; *hilling* is bed-clothes.

Hog is the heap of root crops, preserved through the winter by covering with soil and straw. The verb, *hog up*, by association also means saving money.

Jag is a load, as in U.S. usage.

Jowl, or *Jow-mug*, is a stone-ware bowl, wider at the top than the bottom, rough red on the outside and glazed yellow within. Placed on the *slop-ston*, they together formed the forerunner of the modern sink-unit. The *steen*, a container for water or bread, was of the same ware.

Kale: (1) noun—turn, as when in a queue; (2) verb—to beat someone to it, to get there first.

Maid/Maiden is a clothes-horse.

Marrow: one thing can be *marrow* to another, i.e. matches, makes a pair. An Old Cheshire jingle, quoted by Roger Wilbraham in "An attempt at a Glossary of Some Words used in Cheshire ", *The Archaelogia*, xix (1826), goes:

> The Robin and the Wren
> Are God's cock and hen,
> The Martin and the Swallow
> Are God's mate and marrow.

Oakum: common sense, *nous*, gumption. There is no inhibition amongst dialect speakers in referring to lack of this, as many words and phrases show.

Own: to recognise a relationship. My remark recently to a young man: " Yes, I know she's your aunt, she *owns* you " brought forth an indignant: " What do you mean? Nobody *owns me!* " This sense of the word is obviously lost to his generation.

Park or *Powk* is a sty on the eye.

Piece: pre-eminently a piece of bread covered with jam, meat, cheese, dripping, etc. The same as *butty* or *round.*

Pike: at Mow Cop a *pike* is a pick or a pick-axe. A hay-fork is *pikel. Pikelet* is the better known dropped scone or Scotch pancake, with the addition of dried fruit.

Pimp, like *fornicate*, has no sexual connection, but means to snoop, spy, pry. A common phrase is " *pimping* and squinting ".

Play is any absence from work and, rather sadly, one can *play bad* (sick) or have *play-days* of unemployment. The verb also covers activity in general: " What's he *playing at* now? "

Proud: (1) slightly too big, in need of trimming; (2) pleased, delighted: " I'm *proud* it is fine for the fair "; " I'm *proud* you've come "—said without any sense of being honoured.

Reek is to shriek with laughter.

Rift is the dialect word for belch. As a child I took it to be the more refined word! I still think it sounds it!

Run in is to change one's mind. " They didn't buy that house, they *ran in* ". " They *ran in* going " means they did not go.

Sad: flat, of pastry; not risen properly, of bread. *Thodden* has the same meaning.

Scrawl: to crawl. Crawling creatures are *scrawlers.*

Shut: spoiled, ruined. "A *shut* child ".

Slang: a piece of land or garden, usually long and narrow. (Mr. Levitt gives a fuller note in this *Journal*, 1970.)

Slur, noun and verb (trans. and intrans.): slide.

Smite: a bit, a morsel, the widow's mite.

Snap/Snappin': food taken to work, any food. " Come round on Friday for *snap and rattle* "—food and talk.

Sock: manure, especially liquid manure such as that which runs from the *groop* (drain) in the *shippon* (cowshed).

Spurn: to kick.

Stag or *Miners' Stag* was commonly heard between the wars for " Nystagmus ", an eye disease caused by working in semi-darkness,

and very prevalent before electric light in the mines. "You must have the *stag*" means "You can't see the obvious". (Mr. Levitt gives it for other parts of Staffordshire.)

Stair: very steep. A *stair face* is a steep seam in the coal mine.

Stale: haft, handle, shaft, stem, stalk. "To have jumped over the mop's *stale*" is to live as man and wife, without benefit of clergy—the same as "*living tally*".

Stiff: stout, sturdy, well set up. Also *stiff-built*.

Strap: credit. "Will you *strap* me?" "Will you give me some *strap?*" "Can I have it on *strap?*"—commonly heard in shops in harder times.

Swag: to sway. Too heavy a *jag* will *swag*.

Sword: the rind of bacon. (Used by George Eliot in *Adam Bede*.)

Tack: taste or flavour, especially of an unpleasant kind.

Timber-toed: with feet turned inwards.

Tinkle: to saunter off, to work in a desultory manner, to do odd jobs. "I'll *tinkle* off, it's getting late". "I've *tinkled* about all day and done nothing". "He's not fit for work, he just *tinkles* about a bit at the farm". The adjective *tinkling* means of little importance, trifling.

Tipple, trans./intrans.: tumble, upset balance. *Tippler:* a tumbler pigeon.

Tut, in phrase "to stand one's *tut*": hold fast, stand firm. *Tut-work* in mining was done by bargain. *Tuts/tutsies:* baby talk for feet, or teeth.

Twang: to tighten. There is a phrase "tight as *twang*".

Waft: substance, stamina, character. Usually employed negatively—"He hasn't a bit of *waft* in him".

Yorks: not the cities, old and new, but the straps tied round trouser legs below the knee, worn by miners and other workmen.

LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHTY

by EVELINE BURY

Aye, Ah'm eighty an' Ah tell misel Ah mun start life afresh. It's no use thinkin' Ah con go on t' same owd road—fettlin', shoppin', walkin' o'er t'moors an' poppin' in to see mi pals. That's o'er; t'works are runnin' down.

T'welfare-visitor co'ed t'other day an' sed: " Ow would yo like us to tek yo to t'Centre fur owd folk an' cripples? " (Ah 'ave to wear a caliper, yo see.) Hoo wer verra kind, but Ah werna so sure about t'Centre. Ah'm noan so keen on talkin' about mi operations or yerrin' about other folks' ailments, which is what goin' to these places often amounts to. Anyhow, hoo sed Ah could allus back out if it werna my cup o' tay, so Ah thowt: " Try anythin' once " and promised to go. Maybe, Ah'll find life begins at eighty if Ah do.

Ah met mek a fortune at Bingo, though Ah've never had a go at it yet. There'll 'appen be a choir an' Ah con join in an' sing " Knees up, Mother Brown ", or " Little old lady passing by ". Even if mi voice is cracked, it's no wur nor it's allus bin. If they start dancin', Ah'll put mi best foot forrad, an' do a Caliper Crawl an' if there's a chance o' a bit o' actin', Ah'll see what Ah con do as Principal Girl.

They 'ave outin's to t'seaside, but Ah think as Ah'sta cut them out. The drawback about owd age is that yo' 'ave to be " spendin' a penny " every hauve-'our an' it wouldna be mich fun sittin' outside t'Ladies o' t'day.

T'welfare visitor asked if Ah'd like to be tekken to 'ave a chat wi blind an' disabled folk in their own whoams. Now, THAT met be o'reet. 'Ow we'd go on about th'owd days—we'd be feelin' eighteen agen, noan eighty. Thuse wer times when as mich werna done fur owd folk bi public organisations, but fur thuse wi good families life wer betther i' mony ways. Grandma wer part o' t'family wi a seat bi t'fireside an' allus summat useful to do. Hoo felt wanted. T'best thing about Grandma's life then wer t'grand-childer—no need for baby-sitters then—Grandma wer allus at hand.

But Ah'd betther noan get thinkin' o' t'past; it's Life beginnin' at eighty as Ah'm concerned wi now. Ah'm towd as t'welfare-workers'll tek me shoppin' in t'town, a thing Ah've 'ad to gi' up some years back. What a spending-spree Ah could 'ave wi somedi to tek me round! Ah'd stuff mi pension in mi purse and shuffle round Marks an' Spencers 'an C. an' A's an' Woolworth's an' t'market. Ah'd treat misel to bits o' luxury—a pot o'shrimps (an' if Ah couldna afford that, a bit o' seam-tripe); Ah'd see if there wer any mini-skirts goin' chep an' Ah'd buy a few gee-gaws fur mi great-

grand-childer. There's no tellin' wheer it'd stop—Ah met even get misel a pair o'false eyelashes, or a wig, to keep in wi t'fashion.

Ah weel! That's about o'. There's no gettin' away fra t'fact that eighty's noan an age to start gaddin' about. P'raps Ah'd betther start mi new life cowerin' in th'easy cheer and philosophisin'. Who knows? Ah met let on summat new to gi folks hope, as mi granddowter said when hoo were on'y five: "Where will you go, Grandma, when you are dead?" Ah towd 'er Ah'd 'ave to wait an' see. Hoo went on: "Well, they put dead people in the ground. Perhaps you'll turn into a seed and then you'll grow into a flower—an everlasting flower".

That'd be "life begins at eighty" and no mistake—and not to be sneezed at. To think o' yersel as an everlastin' flower is summat to look forrad to, fur when th'owd flesh 'as 'ad its day, yo con live i' folks' memory as "an everlasting flower" an' life could start afresh.

PAPERIN'

by W. COOKE

Tha's slathered hofe o't' paste, Tom!
Wi' less o' t' paper upon t' wall
Nor's round thi neck, ah see.
But never mind thi, lad,
Tha's tried thi best, no doubt!
It's better now, nor t' white-wesh
Way've had this twenty yer.
An' when ah come to think,
It hasn't all bin waste,
Ah had reight good laugh,
When tha geet thi foot in t' paste.

REVIEW

Bob Dobson, *Lancashire Nicknames and Sayings*. Dalesman Books, The Dalesman Publishing Company Ltd., 1973. 50p.

This book has been written for the best of all possible reasons, as the biographical note explains: "Asked why he wrote this book he replied that the subject interested him and that no-one else had previously made a full study of it".

Mr. Dobson's enthusiasm and interest are apparent throughout. He has ranged widely through the county, collecting nicknames and local folk-lore not merely from major urban centres, or from small separate communities, but from particular districts of various places. For example, he includes Huyton as well as Liverpool, Lower Broughton and Weaste as well as Salford. He has collected brief, tangy names, such as *Middleton Moonraker*, *Hindley Bluffins*, *Horwich Sleepers*. He has also collected popular local rhymes and extended dialect verse, old and new, connected with certain localities. A great deal of work has gone into his study of local traditions. The material is pleasantly presented, and it is enriched by charming line-drawings by Roy J. Bancroft. The front-cover painting by Alex Wright and the back-cover study by Harold Hemingway provide thoroughly appropriate starting and end points.

This is a book to delve into for varied interest and enjoyment. One looks up one's own locality; one learns about other localities. Mr. Dobson is to be congratulated and so, too, are his publishers. Just as there is a need for regional wireless broadcasting, there is a need for regional publishing. *Dalesman Books* have had the enterprise to range widely over such various types of regional interest as dialect, local history, topography and tradition. Mr. Dobson's book, which touches on a number of such interests, is a welcome addition to his publishers' list.

S.B.

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The annual subscription, due on January 1st, is fifty pence. The life membership fee is ten pounds fifty pence. Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Professor G. L. Brook, at the Department of English, The University, Manchester, M13 9PL.

Lancashire Dialect Society

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